

the proposed cut. This restoration is the least we should do. Therefore, we urge our colleagues to vote in favor of this amendment.

Those opposing the amendment contended:

Our colleagues are only looking at one account. Overall, this bill contains two-thirds of all Federal funding for Indian programs. One account in this bill will be cut substantially. However, when all accounts are totaled, one finds that funding will be cut only 8 percent for Indian programs, when all other programs will be cut by an average of 11 percent. Few other functions of Government, on this bill or on any other bill, will probably fare as well. In fact, our understanding is that when funding for other Native American programs passes, the end, total result for this year will be a 5 percent cut in Indian services.

With that said, we feel we should make a few comments about the general impression our colleagues have given us that the solution to the problems that Indians have today is more Federal dependency. It seems somewhat odd to us that the same Senators who argue so strenuously for the need for independence when speaking about welfare reform can in the next breath insist that Indians need only more Federal services. Our colleagues tell us that Indian reservations do not tax--that is their choice. Many reservations have high standards of living. Perhaps the first thing we must admit is that not all Indians have the same problems. The problems, in fact, are concentrated in particular areas. Maybe it is time that we looked at the fact that Native Americans are entitled to free medical care, and, like other free medical care that is provided by the Government, that care has historically been substandard. Perhaps we should look at Native Americans who have relied on Federal welfare programs, and we should see that they have the same social pathologies as do inner city residents who have relied on such programs. No one wants for anyone else to live in poverty, and we are all genuinely dismayed by the conditions on many reservations. Our colleagues are absolutely correct that the problems of Indians have been overlooked. However, we are not certain that the answer is to say that due to treaty obligations we must make sure we pay certain amounts of money. Better solutions should be sought.

As for this amendment, though, our colleagues are making a mistake by focusing on one account. They need to look at the overall picture, and realize that Native Americans are already being treated generously by this bill. We will not favor making cuts in areas that are already being cut by an average of 11 percent in order to treat them even more generously. We accordingly oppose the Domenici amendment.